

Hold On to Me

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/38666394) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/38666394>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Minecraft (Video Game) , Video Blogging RPF
Relationship:	Clay Dream/GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF) , Karl Jacobs
Additional Tags:	Sickfic , Friends to Lovers , Alternate Universe - College/University , Sick GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF) , Worried Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , Touch-Starved Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , Cuddling & Snuggling , TW: dream and george do not have a touchy relationship, that is about to change , TW: Vomiting , Sharing a Bed , First Kiss , Love Confessions , Fluff , Hurt/Comfort , the hurt is sickness , sorry george , one of the softest things i've written , i am so sick right now pls someone cuddle me , Getting Together
Language:	English
Collections:	read 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊
Stats:	Published: 2022-04-28 Words: 10860

Hold On to Me

by [crabnap](#)

Summary

Dream hated how helpless he felt, watching his best friend throw up right in front of him and not knowing if he was allowed to touch him. Did George want him here at all?

He got his answer when George reached for him, blind hands in his shirt, face still in the toilet. "Please." The word echoed shaky, vulnerable, completely stripped of dignity off the white porcelain.

There was no way Dream was denying him when he asked like that.

George gets sick and Dream does anything he can to make him feel better, all while trying not to expose his ridiculously massive crush. The overworked college student sick fic you've all been waiting for.

Notes

TW: VOMITING stay safe everyone <3

hi hi hi everyone it's been a while!! i am here to supply you with a sickfic which i am very

excited about because sickfics are one of my greatest pleasures in life. this is my first time writing one myself and my little touch-starved brain enjoyed it immensely

i actually got sick TWICE while writing this, and i'm a college student approaching finals week with way too many essays due. so you should read this because i have personal experience and also because you pity me. kidding! but only kinda

beta'd by [moon](#)

i hope you enjoy reading! <3

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Dream's shoulder rammed into the metal detector at the door of the university library when he rushed in, not looking where he was going and too stressed to care. He had a paper due in five days, which seemed like a long time, but it had to be six to eight pages and he hadn't even looked at the prompt yet.

He made a beeline for his normal table, the one by the windows, and caught sight of George's messy puff of brown hair. Just that sight, his curls in the sun, made Dream's heart slow a little bit. It was sappy, but whatever. Dream had been in love with him for over a year now, he was allowed to be sappy. Even if George didn't know about it. Even if he had no plans of telling him.

As Dream got closer he noticed that George was face down in his textbook, which was the first weird thing. George was an A+ student. He worked to the point of being nearly obsessive. Dream had never seen him fall asleep doing homework, let alone in the middle of the library at 1 pm on a Tuesday.

Dream slid into the chair next to him. "Hey, George?"

An unconscious mumble.

"George, wake up. We're in the library."

His neck stretched like a cat's, the knob at the top of his spine peeking out of his shirt collar in a way that felt too intimate to look at. Not that Dream was looking.

He finally rolled his cheek against the waxy book page to face Dream, eyes opening bleary and soft.

"Dream." His voice was mush.

"Hey." Dream reached a hand toward his shoulder, some protective instinct taking over his body, but he snapped out of it before he could make contact. He put the hand on the back of George's chair instead. "Did you get enough sleep last night?"

George grunted in a way that sounded like *no*.

Dream bit the inside of his cheek and glanced down at his backpack. He really needed to get started on his essay – if he didn't do it right now he didn't know when he would get around to it. But, then, George was slumped in front of him with the corner of his lips caught on his textbook, making the slant of his mouth stretch across his face, and Dream couldn't just do nothing.

He finally let his hand settle, light as air, against the middle of George's back. "George, come on. That doesn't look like a comfortable place to sleep. Are you feeling okay?"

And somehow that touch seemed to be a catalyst, because now George was sliding away from the table and letting himself fall straight into Dream's chest.

"George!" Dream gripped his shoulders to keep him from falling all the way to the ground. Sleep-numb hands grasped at his shirt and puffs of hot air hit his sternum where George's forehead pressed down.

So, something was definitely wrong. George wasn't touchy with Dream – he wasn't sure if they had even hugged before. George could be touchy sometimes, with Karl or occasionally with Quackity, but never with Dream. And Dream was fine with that – he had made his peace with it. That just wasn't how their friendship worked. It was fine.

But now, *now* – the curls of George's hair were crushed flat against the front of Dream's shirt and he could see that knob under his collar again, could see *past* it, even, to more pale skin shadowed under cotton, and Dream had to physically restrain himself from doing something he couldn't come back from. It was just all so much, all at once, and George was so *warm* like he was trying to sear right through Dream's clothes.

Wait a second. He tried his very best not to blush as he brought a hand up and pushed the back of his knuckles against George's cheek and *yeah, that's definitely not normal.*

"George, you're burning up. Are you sick or something?"

"No," George slurred, "m'fine. Just tired."

And then he honest to god *nuzzled* into Dream's hand.

"Uh." Dream's heart was pounding in his ribcage. There was no way George couldn't hear it. "Can you sit up, do you think? I just wanna make sure."

George nodded against his chest, but he did nothing to actually move.

Great.

Dream did it for him after a few seconds, pushing him up and then holding him steady when he began to sway forward again.

"Oh," George said, frowning and squinting his eyes shut. "I don' feel good."

Dream scoffed. "Yeah, no shit. Where does it hurt?"

"Head." He brought a hand up to press over one eye. "And throat. And kinda nauseous."

"Christ, George."

Dream looked at him, and he knew he wouldn't be getting his essay done anytime soon. George just looked so pitiful like that, his eyes glassy and cheeks flushed a feverish pink and eyebrows furrowed like he was confused. He pouted at Dream like he wanted him to take it all away.

Dream wanted to take it all away.

"Come on. Let's get you back to your room, okay? Is Karl there?"

George shook his head. “No, he’s in lab— wait, why’re we leaving?”

“Because you’re sick,” Dream said, “obviously?”

“No, no I’m fine.” George blinked against the sleep in his eyes. He tried to steady himself with a hand on the edge of the table, but the majority of his weight was still held up by Dream. “I have to finish this for comp sci, it’s due tomorrow.”

“Absolutely not.” Dream squeezed his shoulders to remind him that he was barely upright. “You’re not doing any more homework today, George.”

“But—”

“No.” In a moment of selfishness, Dream let one hand rise to cup his burning cheek. “You’re barely awake,” he said, feather soft. “How are you supposed to get anything done like this?”

“Mmph,” George grumbled. It sounded like giving in. “What about you? Don’ you have that essay to write?”

Since George hadn’t pulled away yet, Dream let himself run his thumb back and forth across his cheekbone. “It’s fine, I can do it some other time. You’re more important to me right now.”

And maybe he was being too soft, too intimate, too over the line of what was acceptable for their friendship, but George’s mouth lifted into the sweetest smile against his palm and it didn’t matter anymore. He squeezed George’s shoulder again.

“Okay?”

George closed his eyes. “Okay.”

—

By some miracle, they managed to make it back to the dorms in one piece. It was a lot of work on both of their parts, George fighting to keep his feet underneath him and Dream fighting to stop the rest of him from collapsing. The stairs were the worst of it, but that spike of adrenaline that let mothers lift cars must have taken over Dream’s body because they reached the third floor without stopping once for air. Turning the corner and seeing George’s door was the greatest relief known to man, and after a few seconds of fumbling the keys out of George’s backpack, the two of them collapsed in a sweaty heap on his bed.

Dream panted, wiping hair off his forehead with a rubbery arm. George was a radiator where he laid half on top of him.

“We made it,” Dream said, wheezy. He looked down to check on George.

George was conscious, which was a good sign, his cheek pressed into Dream’s chest and gazing up with half-lidded eyes. He wasn’t looking much better than he had at the library.

“Okay, George,” Dream said, trying to slide out from under him, “I’m gonna get—”

“No, don’ leave.” It was a mumble, barely intelligible, but the weak hands clutching at Dream’s shirt made the meaning clear.

Dream thought he might just die on the spot. His pulse fluttered like a bird under his skin. He covered George’s hands with his own and lifted them off him.

"I'll be right back, I'm just gonna get you water and some medicine."

George made a little grunt, but he let Dream get off of the bed. "Don' go far."

"Not going far," Dream said, heart swelling against his ribs, "just right over here."

He started rummaging through George's desk drawers. The pain meds would be in here, right? He didn't know what he would do if he couldn't find them. His dorm was on the other side of the green, he couldn't just go get his own stuff.

"Under the sink," George mumbled.

Right. George and Karl were in Honors, which gave them priority choice over the rooms with private bathrooms. Dream went into the little en suite and found a bottle of Tylenol, then filled up the cup by the sink.

When he got back, George was curled into a ball on top of his mattress. His shoes were still on, getting dirt on his light blue duvet, and his eyes were closed. Dream knelt by his side.

"Hey," he whispered, "I got some stuff for you. Do you think you can sit up to take it?"

George cracked one eye open and focused, slowly, on Dream's face. "Yeah." He started to feebly push onto his elbows. "Help me?"

"Sure." Dream was blushing, he was sure of it, as he set down the water and medicine and steadied his hands on George's ribs to ease him into a sitting position. George's shirt was rumpled. His fingers made contact with hot skin.

Dream let go of him as soon as he was able to balance on his own and shook two Tylenols out of the bottle.

"Here you go."

George took the pills gratefully. His eyes closed as he swallowed, and Dream tried not to stare, but it was hard when George's Adam's apple bobbed sharp against his throat and his eyelashes brushed so dark on his pink cheeks.

George let out a little sound as he swallowed again, his face pinching up.

"What's the matter?"

He pressed his fingers to the base of his throat. "Hurts."

Dream could have cried right then and there.

George wasn't the kind of person to admit he was in pain, especially not when it really mattered. He would complain about his feet after a long walk to class, but that was only to be a nuisance. The real pain he kept hidden, pretending nothing was wrong because to admit it would be to admit weakness, to be vulnerable. The only tell Dream had found was the way he would squeeze his thumb and middle finger together until they turned white.

George wasn't doing that now, the hurt written all over his face in the pinch of his brow and the tight set of his mouth. He was weak, here, in a way that Dream had never seen. It felt wrong to look at him.

"I'm sorry," Dream said, because he didn't know what else to say.

George just handed the water cup back and started to lie down again. Dream set the cup and the Tylenol on the floor within reach and began to get up, but George captured his arm in both hands and used it as a pillow.

Dream was on his knees on the hard tile floor, more uncomfortable than he had been in a long time, but George nestled his head into his bicep and hooked two fingers into the front of his shirt and the pain stopped mattering, *poof*, like magic.

Dream let himself lay his other arm over George's side, palm splayed on his shoulder blade, and it was the most intimate position they had ever been in. Their faces were close, and George's eyes were closed, but that didn't make Dream feel any less naked. He could feel the rise and fall of George's ribcage under his thin t-shirt. He tried to match his breaths, but they only got shakier.

George huffed, using his wrist to wipe sweat from his upper lip. "Hot."

"Sorry." Dream backed away instantly, reading this as a dismissal.

"No." George's hand on his arm kept him close, *not a dismissal*, but then he started to wriggle around and Dream had no idea what he was trying to do.

"George?"

He managed to slide one elbow through the arm-hole of his shirt. "Off."

Oh. Well, if Dream hadn't been blushing before, he surely was now. He watched George struggle for a moment before hovering a tentative hand. "Uh." He swallowed. "Do you want help?"

George stopped, no hesitation, and lifted his arms over his head.

Dream's stomach swooped. This was something charged – in other contexts, contexts he should definitely *not* be thinking about right now – and his hands shook as he reached for the hem at George's hips. He made painstakingly sure not to touch bare skin. Pinching the fabric, pulling it a few inches away from George's body, he shimmied the shirt up until George could poke his head under the collar.

Holy shit. Well, now George was shirtless, and there was a pretty red flush on his chest to match his cheeks, and he looked fucking perfect. Of course he did. Dream was struggling to stay focused. Leering at your sick and delirious friend was *not okay*, not at all, but that knowledge wasn't enough to stop him. George just looked so fucking *pretty*.

"Dr'm," George said, and he was sure he was caught.

'*Stop staring.*'

'*You're making me uncomfortable.*'

'*What are you, a pervert?*'

But George didn't say any of those things. He just reached out for Dream, all fluid and soft and warm, and if Dream didn't know any better he would think he wanted to *cuddle* him. Shirtless. Delirious. Dream's hands on his bare skin.

Pull yourself together. Jesus. But George made it so hard. He settled for safety, curling a hand over George's forearm and rubbing his thumb back and forth on warm skin.

Barely a moment had passed, but something was fundamentally different now. George was wide awake, suddenly, his eyes still foggy but fully open. His breaths were getting faster with each exhale. Dream could see how shallow they were in the way his pale side barely rose and fell.

“George?”

He was almost hyperventilating now. “Dream,” he said, his voice pure dread.

“What is it? What’s wrong?” Dream could feel his own heart rate picking up.

The color was gone from George’s face, a stark change after being so pink for so long. “I think I’m gonna be sick.”

Oh, god. “Shit, okay. Okay.” Dream fumbled around for anything useful, spotting George’s little blue wastebasket under his desk. He lunged for it.

George had his head in his hands when Dream came back, his whole body heaving with his breaths. “Dream. Dream. Dream.”

“I know, I know.”

Dream’s heart was breaking, broken, shattered on the floor at the shining fear in George’s eyes. He knew how it was right before throwing up, how it felt like the world was going to end.

He pressed the wastebasket into George’s hands and pulled him up, hands around his upper arms, until he was standing shakily on the floor. He was still wearing his shoes.

George whined high in his throat, almost like a dog. “I don’t feel good. Oh god.” A line of spit fell from his mouth into the wastebasket.

“It’s okay,” Dream said, pulling him towards the bathroom, “you’re gonna be okay.”

They made it there, by some miracle, before George collapsed on his knees in front of the toilet and threw up.

“It’s okay, it’s okay, you’re okay,” Dream babbled, dropping down next to him, his heart in his throat.

George sniffled. “Fuck.”

“You’re gonna be just fine.”

George retched again.

Dream hated how helpless he felt, watching his best friend throw up right in front of him and not knowing if he was allowed to touch him. Would a hand on his back be soothing or would it just make things worse? Did George want him here at all?

He got his answer when George reached for him, blind hands in his shirt, face still in the toilet.

“Please.” The word echoed shaky, vulnerable, completely stripped of dignity off the white porcelain.

There was no way Dream was denying him when he asked like that. He wrapped his arms around George’s waist, skin hot and tight and still so soft despite it all, and let his cheek rest on George’s back right under that knob at the top of his spine.

The muscles in George's stomach rolled, Dream *felt* them roll, all angry and sharp like protruding bones. He threw up again into the toilet and whimpered.

Dream rubbed his back in slow circles. "I'm sorry George, I'm so sorry."

"It's not going away," George sobbed, and something in Dream's chest cracked beyond repair. "When's it gonna go away?"

"Soon," he said, blinking back tears, "it'll be gone soon. I've got you, you're okay."

George sobbed again, retched again, and Dream didn't care anymore that his tears were leaving cold marks on George's back. Before he could stop himself, he tilted his cheek to leave a soft kiss on George's shoulder blade.

"I've got you. You're doing so well. Everything is gonna be okay."

George retched, spit, dragged in shaky breaths that jittered under Dream's hands. "Thank you." His voice was a wreck.

Dream held him a little tighter. "Of course."

The throwing up went on for a while, Dream's hands on George's hot skin trying anything to create a bit of comfort. He found his hair, eventually, and that was a saving grace because every time he dragged his nails along George's scalp he felt him go a little boneless. It was the best he could do, holding George up as he melted more and more into his arms.

An eternity later, he seemed too exhausted to throw up anymore. His head lolled against the side of the toilet seat, his body caged in by Dream's arms and bent knees, and Dream had trouble sitting up from how much of his weight was pressed into his chest. They were both sweaty and tear-stained and the bathroom smelled of sour vomit, but Dream would rather be here than anywhere else. He brushed hair off of the sticky back of George's neck.

"Do you think you're gonna be sick again?" he asked, his voice falling soft on the fragile silence of the bathroom.

George blinked slow at the toilet bowl. "No, I don't think so. Not for a while."

"Okay, that's good." Dream rubbed his back to keep him awake. They needed to get him to his bed, somehow.

George made a sound in the back of his throat, something small and helpless. "I feel so gross."

Dream couldn't keep the fondness from reaching his fingers when he lifted his hand to stroke the hair at George's temple. "You're not gross. You are a mess, though. Hang on."

When he pulled back to get up from the tile floor, George raised his head to watch him with wide, puppy dog eyes. "Where're you going?"

"Just to the sink, I'll be right back." Dream put fingertips out to steady him when he started to sway backward. "Woah, easy there. Just hang on for me for one second?"

George was clingy in his sickness, leaning back against Dream's shins like he wasn't going to let him go, but after a moment he nodded. Dream made sure George had a firm grip on the toilet bowl before going over to the sink.

He ripped a few paper towels off the roll and wetted them with cold water. Hoping George wouldn't notice, he also darted out into the main room and grabbed the cup from earlier.

When he came back, George was pouting. "You left."

Dream held back a laugh. He hated himself for it, but he couldn't help but love this version of George – touchy, soft, staring at him like he trusted him, like he *needed* him.

"I was gone for like two seconds."

"But you said you were jus' going to the sink."

Dream knelt down beside him and he softened up immediately, leaning his back into Dream's chest again. "Sorry," Dream said, wrestling his heart down his throat, "I forgot I left your water in the other room."

George huffed like this was not a satisfactory excuse to stop touching him for five seconds. He picked his head up from the toilet seat and put it on Dream's shoulder instead.

Dream unfolded the wet paper towel on his leg with a shaky hand. Anchoring his left hand at the back of George's neck, he began to wipe the vomit and drool from the corners of his mouth.

George hummed, and Dream felt it buzz through his lips. They really were perfect lips, even like this, even when his breath was sour and there was spit crusted in the dip of his chin. Dream flipped the paper towel to a clean side, feeling like a creep for thinking about it. Why did he have to notice the flutter of George's eyelashes, the soft blush in his cheeks, the way his lips went red as Dream wiped at them? They were sitting next to vomit and George was barely lucid. He needed to get a grip.

"S nice," George mumbled, his words muffled when the towel dragged at his mouth.

His eyes were closed, but Dream still felt caught for staring at him. "Yeah?" He cleared his throat. "Not too rough?"

George shook his head, the weight of it shifting on Dream's left palm. "Y're very gentle. Where'd you learn t'do that?"

"Do what? Be gentle?"

"Yeah."

Dream shrugged, a self-conscious instinct, pointless because George couldn't see it. "Dunno." He tipped George's jaw with a thumb to wipe at the trail of spit under his chin. "I just don't want to hurt you."

"Do I look easy t' hurt?" Despite the slurring of his words, George's eyes were clear when he opened them. His gaze scattered across Dream's face.

Dream took a moment to answer that. George felt so much closer with his eyes open. It was something about the way he had to drop his gaze way down to move from Dream's eyes to his lips. It was something about the way he kept looking at Dream's lips.

"Yes," Dream said, eventually, barely conscious of the conversation they were having anymore. "Right now, you do."

“Hm.” George let his eyes fall shut again, tipping forward until his face hit the side of Dream’s neck. His hands curled in his shirt.

The way George’s breath puffed against his skin, mouth closed on his collarbone, was almost too much for Dream. Too much to take, and too much to survive on anything else. Too much to never have again. Dream let him stay there for a long, selfish moment before he tugged on George’s shoulder.

“Hey, Georgie. You need to wash out your mouth before you can fall asleep.”

George groaned on his skin. It was almost enough to crumble his resolve.

“Come on. It’ll just take a minute, and then you can go lay down in your bed.”

George mumbled something that sounded an awful lot like ‘no.’

“No?” Dream jostled his shoulder softly. “What do you mean, no?”

“Don’t wanna go there,” George slurred. “Wanna stay here with you.”

God help me. Of all the things George had said to him today, this might have been the most terrifying. George would rather sit on the cold tile floor, in his arms, than alone in bed. Dream swallowed his heartbeat. “Wh-what if I lay down with you over there? How about that?”

George seemed to think for a moment. That, or he had fallen back asleep. Eventually, he lifted his face with soft bleary eyes. “Promise?”

Dream felt his chest physically crack, tasted some pent-up substance pouring over his tongue. “Yeah, I promise.”

“Okay.” George made grabby hands for the cup that was abandoned on the bathroom floor. Dream gave it to him and guided him into an upright position.

“Just rinse your mouth and spit into the toilet. The stomach acid is bad for your teeth.”

George took a dutiful sip, swishing the water around for a few seconds before spitting, then did it two more times. Seeing the sheen of water on George’s bottom lip, Dream reached out to wipe it away. He had been moving on instinct, barely conscious of his actions, but when he touched plush, soft skin with the bare pad of his thumb he was made jarringly aware. George didn’t seem to notice his panic, even leaning into his hand the slightest bit.

Dream startled away, his movements a little too jumpy to appear casual. He pretended to have done it on purpose, grabbing for the cup in George’s hand like it was about to spill. “Good. Okay. Uh, you can just drink some now. Small sips, though.”

They were both holding the cup now, Dream keeping his fingers wrapped over George’s under the guise of holding it steady. George took big gulps and Dream tugged on his hand in protest.

“Smaller, smaller. You’re gonna make yourself sick again.”

George slowed down, his swallows bobbing in his throat. Dream thought about how weird swallowing sounded when you really paid attention to it. Still, in some nonsensical way, George’s swallows sounded like George – quiet, soft, like he was trying to be delicate about it. Maybe that was just because his throat was sore and he *was* trying to be delicate about it. Maybe Dream was an actual psychopath for thinking about this.

George pulled the cup away, wiping his mouth on the shoulder of Dream's t-shirt like it was put there for him to use. Dream couldn't even be mad – he would have mopped up George's vomit with that shirt if he didn't have access to anything else. He was a massive, hopeless simp and George had to be aware of this on some level, had to know that he would let George do just about anything to him.

If George had any scrap of this monumental knowledge, he only showed it in little movements like that. He still looked at Dream like he had no clue how hard his heart was pounding.

"Can we sleep now? Smells bad 'n here."

Dream reached out to flush the toilet. "Yeah, sure. Come on, you've gotta get up for me."

George groaned. "That wasn't part of the deal."

"What did you expect?" He laughed as he stood up, finding it very difficult with a clumsy George clinging to any part of him he could reach. "You can't just teleport to your bed. Come on, you're almost done."

"But I don't want to." George was hanging onto the front of his pants now, which could get very bad very fast if it went on for much longer. "Can you carry me? You should jus' carry me."

"Carry you?" Dream took George's hands. He was so soft like this, looking up at Dream with those sky-wide eyes. Who was Dream to say no? "I guess I could do that. Tuck your legs up."

George complied, and Dream sent a silent thank you to Sappnap for making him do squats at the gym the other day as he hooked his arms under George's knees and behind his back and lifted him off the ground. George squeaked a little at the sudden motion, his hand coming up to grip loosely at the back of Dream's neck. Once they were all the way up, Dream caught sight of them in the bathroom mirror.

George giggled, sleepy and slow. "Look at my ass," he said.

Their position did have it quite on display, hanging down between Dream's arms with George's underwear waistband peeking out of his sweats. Dream pretended not to notice this. "You're such an idiot."

George dropped his hand to slap it. "Boom."

"Jesus Christ, George. I think that fever might be giving you brain damage."

"No, you're wrong." George nuzzled his face into Dream's chest.

Dream scoffed. "I'm *wrong*?" It was just such a stupid thing to say.

"Yes." A yawn. "And an idiot."

"Okay."

At this point George was just spouting stock phrases, something he did when he was too tired to think. One time Dream had had an entire conversation with him in a study room at one in the morning in which the only things he would say were 'you're an idiot' and 'shut up.'

Dream maneuvered them out of the bathroom and back over to George's bed. He was a lot lighter than Dream had been expecting – Dream would have to start taking him out to Olive Garden more

once this sickness was over. George had a powerful romantic love for breadsticks that put the term ‘endless’ to the ultimate test whenever they ate there.

Dream set George down on the mattress, feeble hands grasping at his shirt as he moved away.

“Wai’. No.” George pouted at him, bleary and slurred. “Stop leaving. I wan’ you to stay.”

Dream tried to ignore the way his stomach fluttered. “I’m not going anywhere, just have to take your shoes off.”

George grunted like he had forgotten he was still wearing them. He kicked his feet out and let Dream pull them off, burying his face down into his quilt. Dream set the shoes under the bed and laid down, very cautiously, his heart hammering as he wedged a pillow under his head.

George reached for him immediately, wrapping his arms around him and pulling him in like a giant squid. He nudged his nose into the space between Dream’s shoulder and neck, which tickled a little, but more than that it felt like fire. Warm breath puffed over his skin and George was everywhere, a line of heat blooming all the way down the side of Dream’s body. He could get addicted to this.

George nuzzled closer with a little groan. “Stomach still hurts. An’ head, an’ throat. This sucks.”

With shaking fingers, Dream brushed the hair at the back of George’s neck. “Do you feel nauseous still?”

“No. Stings, though. Fuck, ‘s getting worse.”

George curled into him as his stomach cramped up, fisting the front of his shirt with iron knuckles.

“It hurts,” George whimpered into his neck. “It hurts.”

Dream’s heart ripped down the middle in searing heat. He swiped his thumb up and down George’s side. “I’m so sorry, Georgie. It’s gonna be okay.”

They stayed that way for a few heartbeats, George shaking in Dream’s arms. He made a drawn out sound, and it was only then that Dream felt the tears cooling against his skin. There was that vulnerability again, so unlike any version of George he had ever seen and so so fragile.

“It’s not going away,” George whispered. “Please, please make it go away.”

“I wish I could.” Dream was going to get up to try to find some crackers or something, anything to make the pain stop, but then George was reaching for his hand and pressing it flat against his hot, bare stomach.

Dream was shocked still for a moment.

He tried not to think about how big his hand looked against milky skin, how far it stretched, how close his pinky dipped towards a navy waistband. These were things he could not think about. Not right now.

“Is this helping?” he asked, voice delicate.

George settled onto his back, holding Dream’s hand in place, and let out a little sound.

Dream supposed that was a yes. He curled around George’s side and let his hand lay soft, his palm centered over George’s belly button.

“How is it now?”

“A little better,” George whispered. He dropped his arm back to his side. “Your hand is warm.”

“Yeah— uh.” Dream tried not to think about how clammy his palm was, how he could feel the rise and fall of George’s breaths. He didn’t have an end to his sentence, but it didn’t seem like George was paying attention anyway.

He had his eyes closed, head slanted on Dream’s bicep, his brow still furrowed but smoothing more and more with every breath. He was beautiful like this. Beautiful like he always was. Dream stared at him long enough to memorize the length of each of his eyelashes.

Once it seemed likely that George had fallen asleep, Dream let his thumb swipe, just barely, over the peach fuzz on his abdomen. He reacted instantly, nuzzling his cheek on Dream’s arm and tilting his stomach closer. *He’s like a cat*, Dream thought, half-dazed by the flush rushing to his face. He swiped his thumb again, back and forth, and George hummed a soft note.

This was bordering on dangerous. Dream knew it, but he couldn’t bring himself to stop. He started moving his hand in a slow circle, soft touches on impossibly smooth skin, and George practically *purred* at him. Dream watched his face, mesmerized, running his hand in a warm drag up to George’s sternum and back down, side to side between his hips and in swirling shapes that painted and repainted over each other.

George was barely conscious at this point, and maybe that was what let Dream go over the line of friendship. He began drawing hearts over George’s stomach, *I love you I love you I love you* pressed into soft skin until his palm tingled with it. He let it all show, every touch a confession in blooming warmth. It was fine, because George wouldn’t remember this when he woke up. It was fine to bring a hand up to George’s heartbeat and stall it there, to dip in and kiss his forehead, to hold him like he was made of rain on flower petals.

And when George stirred in his sleep only when Dream’s hand stopped moving, it was fine to lean close and whisper honey in his ear. “Shh. It’s okay, baby. I’ve got you.”

“Mm. Dr’m.”

“Yes?” Dream’s heart caught up against the back of his throat, not sure if George was dreaming about him or if he had heard what he said.

“Don’ go.” The words were barely comprehensible, but George’s calves curling around his made the intent clear.

It was electric, this feeling, the two of them standing so precariously on a ledge that Dream didn’t know the bottom of. He tried not to tip them, but he couldn’t stop his words from slipping out far too soft. “I’m not going anywhere, love. I’ll stay as long as you want me to.”

George shuffled closer, close enough to press his nose to the base of Dream’s throat and breathe him in. “Dr’m.”

“I’m here, baby.” Something about the way George clung to him made tears push against the backs of his eyes.

He kept drawing soft circles on George’s stomach, lifting his other hand to tangle in George’s hair. There was that protective instinct again, taking over his body and filling his blood with a desperate need for *closer*. If he could fit George inside his skin, maybe then he could keep the hurt from getting to him. Dream had to restrain from squeezing him. The greedy little thing in his chest

clawed at his ribs.

“I’d never leave you,” Dream whispered, needing to put this feeling somewhere.

George nuzzled deeper into the side of his neck. He was so warm, so warm and soft with the sweet smell of his shampoo flooding Dream’s nose. It didn’t take long to fall asleep.

The sky was darkening orange when Dream woke up, and George was shivering against him. He pulled him closer on instinct.

“George? You okay?”

George burrowed into his chest. “Cold.”

It didn’t make sense, because his bare skin was sticky with sweat. His fever must have come back.

“Okay, hang on.” Dream shimmied and squirmed until he could get George’s blanket out from under them, pulling it up to wrap around George’s shoulders.

He reached down to the floor with hopeful fingers, relieved when he found the bottle of Tylenol still sitting where he had left it. He shook out two pills and George stuck his tongue out to accept them. When he settled back down, George reached a blanket-clad arm around him and pulled him into the cocoon of warmth under the quilt.

Dream responded without even needing to think about it, tangling their legs and slotting George’s body against his side. It got easier every time, touching George like this, and Dream knew it would hurt like hell when he had to stop. He spread his hand wide over George’s burning spine.

“How do you feel?”

George shivered closer. “A little better. I feel awake now, at least.”

“That’s good.” Dream drew hearts over his hip bone with one finger, barely conscious of it, still touching him as if he was asleep and there were no consequences to his actions.

But then George was looking up at him with furrowed eyebrows, and the illusion was shattered. “Why do you do that?” He drew a heart over Dream’s chest, right where his pulse thundered, as if to clarify what he meant.

Dream stopped dead in his tracks. “Uh.”

He didn’t have an answer. Not a good one, at least. All he knew was that the light coming through the window was dim and it was so impossibly warm under the blankets and George felt like something precious in his arms – something to be protected, and cared for, and *loved*. Dream loved him, but that wasn’t an answer he could give.

“I didn’t mean that I wanted you to stop,” George said. “I’m just curious.”

Dream felt too exposed to keep going, knowing that George was aware of his hands. He touched back down to his hip, letting his palm rest flat on his skin, and even that felt like vulnerability.

“I dunno,” he said, trying not to sound like his throat was tense and dry. “Guess I just thought it might help. Positive energy, and all that.”

George scoffed. "Is that why you called me 'baby,' too?"

Good god. So, George was snarky when he had just woken up from a fever nap. Good to know.

"I did *not* call you '*baby*.'" Denial, because that was his last remaining defense.

George sat up on his elbows. "Yes, you did. You *one hundred percent* did. I know what I heard."

"Well, you must have been dreaming! Why were you dreaming about that kind of thing, anyway? Did my caretaking skills sweep you off your feet?"

"Dream, stop trying to *gaslight* me." George was pointing an accusatory finger at him now, barely an inch away from his nose because there really wasn't all that much space between them. "I know you called me 'baby.' Now fess up."

It was weird because Dream's hands were still on him, gently splayed across his bare ribs. When Dream swiped his thumbs up and down in a nervous habit, they painted George's skin and gave him away.

"Fine! Maybe I did," Dream said. "I don't remember. I wasn't really paying attention to what I was saying."

And when this made George hunch into himself slightly, he couldn't figure out what he had said wrong.

"Okay." George pulled out of his touch. "Wanna watch a movie or something? My throat hurts and talking is making it worse."

Dream almost gave in, heart aching for him, but George always knew just when to pull the pity card in order to get out of uncomfortable situations and Dream wasn't going to let it work this time. "Wait, George."

"Hmm?" He was already sitting up, curling into himself, creating distance between them even though he had wanted Dream so close only moments before.

"What is it?" Dream sat up with him. "Why are you dropping this so fast? You'd usually make fun of me now."

"I don't know, Dream. I guess I'm just tired." And the way he said it made it sound like he was tired, tired in some bone-deep way that sleep couldn't fix. "And sick. I'm not really paying attention to what I'm saying."

It clicked. Dream scooted into George's space again, overlapping their folded legs and taking his hands. "George."

George didn't give him anything, staring at their hands in his lap.

Dream touched the insides of his wrists. "I meant everything I said, you know."

This got George to look at him. "What, the stuff you don't remember?"

"No— I remember." He shrugged a little to keep the tension from snaking up his neck. "I don't know why I said that. I remember everything I said, and I meant it."

George stared at him for a long time. In the end, he just hummed and drifted back into Dream's side.

They watched *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* on his phone. It was kind of nice, to be honest. Dream hadn't watched a movie all the way through in months, too busy with school and life to ever really sit still. He knew his essay was still looming, could feel it like a bitter taste in the back of his throat, but he had to admit that taking a few hours to relax was probably good for him. He could breathe freely for the first time in a while.

George fell asleep halfway through the movie. So much for feeling awake. Dream didn't mind, though, just pulled him closer and watched on his own. He whispered his commentary into George's hair, because he didn't want to wake him but he was also one of those people who couldn't keep quiet during movies. George was the same, when he was awake. They were despised at the movie theaters.

Just as the end credits were playing and Dream was made aware of how dark the room had gotten, the overhead lights near-blinded him. Karl shut the door loudly and dropped his backpack on the ground.

"Hey Geor—" He stopped dead in his tracks. "Oh, sorry, should I leave—"

Dream reassessed their position, George curled into his side and half on top of him with the blanket covering them from the chest down. Heat rushed to his cheeks. "No, you're fine, Karl."

"Okay, uh, hi Dream?"

"Hi— this isn't what it looks like, by the way."

Karl sat down on his bed across from them. "Oh, it's not?"

"George got sick and I'm staying with him to make sure he's okay."

George raised a hand off Dream's chest in a sheepish wave. "Hi, Karl."

Dream hadn't realized he was awake.

"Hiya, Georgie." Karl's grin was soft, concerned. He was a good friend. "How are you feeling?"

"Like dogshit," George said, his voice muffled in Dream's chest.

"Awe. I'm sorry, man."

George flicked his hand in a dismissive gesture. "S'okay."

Dream suddenly felt very out of place in this exchange, laying in George's bed like a sentient pillow and eavesdropping on their conversation.

"Yeah," he cleared his throat. "Well, I'm sure he'll be in good hands now that you're here."

George, still warm with sleep, took a hold of Dream's wrist. It didn't seem to be a conscious action, more like the way he would grasp his own wrist when his hands were in his lap. George was always holding onto himself, like he had to make sure he wouldn't float away.

Dream found this gesture extremely distracting, and missed whatever it was that Karl had said. He nodded and pretended like he wasn't short circuiting. "Uh, yeah. I should probably get going now, anyways, it's getting kinda late."

Karl bobbed his head. "Sounds good, man. I'll keep an eye on George. You should probably chug some vitamin C when you get home."

“Hah, yeah.” Dream looked down at George. George, who didn’t tell him to stay, just blinked up at him with those slow eyes, but whose fingers stayed curled around his wrist and body stayed weighing him down like he had no intent of moving. Dream squeezed his side. “George? You gonna be okay if I head out?”

George buried his nose in the hollow of Dream’s throat and shivered closer. A quiet whine escaped his lips. He was half asleep and feverish, and apparently this made him shameless.

Karl was watching them with raised eyebrows. Dream let out a breathy laugh.

“Uh, sorry. He’s kinda clingy right now.”

“Yeah, I can see that.” Karl leaned forward, squinting like his vision wasn’t quite right. “I’ve known George for two years and I’ve never seen him like this. It’s fuckin’ weird.”

“Same here,” Dream said. He didn’t elaborate on the fact that it had gotten less weird for him with every second, that he almost wanted George to stay sick forever if it meant he would keep touching Dream like this. It was a selfish thought, but Dream was a weak man.

George snuffled and murmured incomprehensibly into his skin. It was amazing how quickly he could fall asleep.

“I’m gonna try to sneak out,” Dream whispered, shuffling away from George as gingerly as he could.

Karl nodded. He still looked shocked by the whole display. Dream slowly eased his way out of George’s arms and slotted a pillow into the space he used to fill. By some miracle, George stayed asleep.

“Okay,” Dream whispered. “I’m gonna head out. Let me know if you need anything.”

Karl nodded. “Thank you. I’ll take good care of him.”

Dream looked down at George one last time, at the way his hair splayed across the pillow and his hands curled up near his face. His cheeks were dappled pink, lips flushed and barely parted. Something inside Dream tugged toward him strong enough to hurt. He looked away.

“Goodnight, Karl.”

“Night!”

Dream tried to ignore how wrong it felt to walk out the door.

—

It was nearly two in the morning when Dream’s phone rang. He hadn’t been asleep, was working on his essay like a madman with an energy drink by his side, but he was still a little shocked that someone would call him at this hour. He reached for his phone.

“Karl?”

“Dream.” Karl let out a short breath that came through the phone like metallic grating. “I’m so sorry to call you this late, I promise I wouldn’t have if it wasn’t important.”

Dream pushed away from his desk, already calculating the distance to his keys, jacket, shoes.

“What’s the matter?”

Sapnap shuffled around in his bed across the room, but he didn't open his eyes. He was a heavy sleeper.

"George is having a really rough time right now," Karl said, strain and sleep deprivation clear in his voice. "I'm trying to help him but all he wants is you. He keeps asking for you and crying and I don't know what to do anymore."

A shiver went down Dream's spine and curled up in his toes. George wanted him. George *needed* him, was crying for him in the middle of the night and he was never this selfish, would never ask him to leave his room at two in the morning but here he was, doing it. Dream didn't care. He was selfish, too, for wanting this. He had been faking productivity by throwing words on a page but the only thing on his mind had been George, and how much he wanted to walk right back to his room and curl up beside him.

Dream grabbed his keys. "I'm on my way."

Karl's relief was audible. "Thank you, man. Really. I'm sorry again for asking you to do this."

"Don't worry about it. See you soon."

"Okay. Thank you."

As soon as Karl hung up, Dream was out the door. It was amazing how fast a man could traverse the dorms when he was really and truly desperate. It was also amazing what a good dose of adrenaline could do. Dream was barely panting after taking the green at half a sprint and climbing three floors of stairs. He knocked on George's door.

Karl opened it, completely breathless. "Hi, thank god you're here. Thank you for coming."

Dream followed him inside. "Hey. Where's George?"

Karl sagged against the wall. "In the bathroom. I have a thing about, uh, vomit. I've been kinda useless."

"That's okay. It's not your fault." Dream dropped a hand on his shoulder. His sister was the same way, and he knew how bad it could get. Even if she wanted to help someone, she knew doing so would only make things worse. It wasn't exactly helpful to a sick person to have a panic attack right next to them. "Here, take my keys and go crash in our dorm. You know Sapnap won't mind."

"Are you sure?" Karl's brow pinched in the middle. "I can't in my right conscience leave you to deal with this alone."

"I'm sure." Dream pressed the keys into his hand. "You can't really be much help to him right now anyway, and I mean that in the nicest way possible. I understand. I've got this, I'm okay with it. Go get some rest."

Karl looked at him for a few seconds, then nodded. "Okay. Thank you. I'm in your debt for, like, forever."

"Don't worry about it." Dream opened the door, and Karl practically sprinted out of it. He took a moment to chuckle and watch him run down the hall before turning away.

The sound of retching came, like a punch to the gut, from behind the bathroom door. Dream closed the distance in two strides.

The sight that greeted him was enough to make his heart drop, aching and heavy, into the pit of his stomach. George was down to his boxers, now, his bare knees rubbed red on the tiles, and he was shaking. Sweat drenched the hair at the back of his neck and made it curl. His whole body trembled over the toilet bowl as he heaved scraping breaths and gripped the porcelain with white-knuckled hands. He retched again, coughing up nothing but a drool of stomach bile.

“Oh, honey.” Dream didn’t even care to hold back the pet name, dropping to his knees at George’s side in an instant.

George looked up through tear-filled eyes. “Dream?”

His heart just about broke. “Hey, Georgie.”

“You came.” George trembled, wiping his chin with the back of his hand. “I– ‘re you really here?”

“Yeah, I’m here. I’m right here.” He reached out and pressed his palm to George’s back. It connected like it fit there. “How are you doing?”

“Y’re here. Y’re here.” And suddenly Dream’s arms were filled with a weak and sniffling George. A sob wracked his shaking body. “Thank you.”

Dream pulled him close. “Of course, George, you know I’ll always be here if you need me.”

“I woke up an’ you were–” he hiccuped, “I couldn’t find you an’ I felt so sick again an’ I didn’t know where you were.”

Now Dream’s heart really did break, shattered on the tiles beneath them in splinters because he couldn’t stand to imagine it, to know that George was afraid and in pain and *needing* him. He painted his hands up and down the expanse of George’s back and buried his face in his hair.

“I’m so sorry, baby. I thought you would be okay with Karl. I wouldn’t have left if I thought you needed me to stay.”

George sniffled into his chest. “You make it better.”

And the meaning was clear. *He* made it better, not anyone else – Dream made George feel better. The possessive animal thing purred in his gut and he ignored it.

He let his hand curl around George’s side and barely grazed his stomach with a thumb. “Am I making it better right now?”

George only hummed, burrowing closer, wiping a mixture of tears and snot and bile onto Dream’s shirt. He didn’t care. All that mattered was George.

“Do you think you’re gonna throw up again, sweetheart?”

George thought for a moment, sniffling, then shook his head. He shifted until he was more comfortably sitting in Dream’s arms. “‘M sorry about your shirt,” he said. “It smells bad.”

“It’s okay, I don’t mind.” Dream reached for a cup of water sitting on the floor near them. Karl must have put it there earlier – he was a better friend than he thought of himself as. If Dream had a phobia of vomiting he would have been out the door immediately.

“‘M sorry about all of this.” George was winding himself up now, curling into a ball against Dream’s chest. Tears fell hot from his cheeks. “This ‘s so gross, an’ I’m making you deal with it,

an— an’ I just got vomit on your shirt.”

“Hey, hey.” Dream took his face in both hands and waited for him to meet his eyes. His eyelashes were dark, clumped together and shining wet. Dream spoke slowly. “It’s okay. I don’t mind. It’s you, y’know? I’d do just about anything for you.”

George physically softened in his hands. “Wh’t about your shirt?”

Dream reached back and pulled it over his head. “See?” He smiled. “Problem solved.”

Dazedly, George set his palms on Dream’s collarbones. It was more intimate now. Dream almost regretted taking his shirt off, because the way George’s side leaned into his bare stomach was a little too much to handle.

He busied himself with the water. Dipping a clean corner of his shirt into the cup, he started using it to wipe George’s chin and mouth. When the cloth was dirty, he soaked a new piece of it and cleaned the sweat from George’s face and the back of his neck. George closed his eyes. He let Dream turn his face with gentle fingers, this intimate ritual becoming almost familiar to them. When Dream was done, he gave George the cup of water and made him rinse his mouth and spit in the toilet.

When he carried George to bed and laid down next to him, the only thing he knew was skin. Skin touching everywhere, warm and soft, chests pressing together and ankles tangling and Dream’s palm drawing circles on George’s stomach. George’s cheek rested just above his sternum. He could feel the cool press of the hair at George’s temple, still slightly damp, and he wasn’t sure how he would ever let go of this. In George’s bed, skin to skin, the early morning darkness going purple outside the window. George would get better, soon, and then what? They would have to go back to the way they had always been. Dream didn’t think he would survive it.

On the edge of sleep, George stirred in his arms and pressed a warm kiss right over his heart.

“I love you,” George murmured. “So much.”

And Dream’s heart kind of broke, even as it soared, because he didn’t want George to be fever-high the first time he said this. He didn’t want it to feel so fleeting, like the last glimpse of a dream that you would forget once you woke up. He didn’t want this to be the end.

“I love you too, George.” He held him closer. “Go to sleep. I’m not going anywhere.”

—

Dream was used to the sun blinding him awake in the mornings, which was why he was surprised when he nuzzled into warmth and realized that the light behind his eyes was mild and pleasant. He blinked, lazy, sensation coming to him in blurry scraps. First was the warmth, then the softness tickling under his chin, then...the weight on his chest.

George was on his chest.

It was a startling realization to have, but memory caught up to him fast and once the shock wore off he gave into the selfish urge to pull George closer. He was so soft like this, his eyelids shining in the weak morning sun and lashes brushing dark on pink cheeks. Dream could watch him for hours, could live off the way the lax muscles of his back rose and fell with his breaths and the shadow created by that knob at the top of his spine.

Something cold poured into Dream’s stomach when he realized this might be the last time he

would see George like this, so close and sleep-bare, the stress completely gone from his face. He drew a careful line from George's hip to his ribs with a palm, and George's fingers twitched on Dream's bare stomach.

Dream held his breath. *Don't wake up. Please don't wake up.*

He finally exhaled, because he had to if he didn't want to pass out. George nudged up with his nose, searching, his eyes still closed as he found the line of Dream's throat and pushed his feet against the mattress to shove up into it. Dream's heart broke into George's two limp hands. He pulled him closer, palms on slow ribs, as if he could drink enough of this to live off of.

"Morning," came the groggy whisper.

"Morning," he whispered back.

George sighed into his neck. "'Time is it?'"

"Uh, I dunno. Late, I think."

"Mm."

The silence stretched a moment, and George still wasn't moving away.

"How do you feel?" Dream asked.

George's hand brushed up Dream's stomach, leaving sparks in its wake. "Pretty good, actually. I think the sleep helped."

"That's good."

Dream's heart was sinking, sinking, somehow finding newer depths with each passing second. How much longer did he have? How long until George got out of bed and they never touched like this again?

"I'm sorry for putting you through all this," George said, drawing absentminded swirls just below Dream's sternum. "I know I'm a handful when I'm sick."

"No, no, it's okay. I didn't mind. Seriously." Dream allowed himself the tiniest thumb swipe on George's ribs. It felt so different, doing this on a new day, when George was alert and himself and when his breath caught almost imperceptibly next to Dream's ear.

It was all too much. Dream began to pull away. It was counterproductive, the opposite of what he wanted, but something about this whole situation felt like a bomb. Like it would detonate any second now, and maybe if he got far enough away the explosion wouldn't kill him.

George's head popped up to watch him scoot into a sitting position. "Where are you going?"

Dream swallowed the nervous taste in his mouth. This wasn't sick George, this was *George* George. Why was he still being clingy? "Uh— nowhere. Just up here. Why?"

George shrugged one shoulder, sitting up as well. His stomach rolled soft when he leaned over his folded legs and Dream wanted to touch it again. "Just worried you were leaving."

"Oh." Dream forced himself to make eye contact. "No, I wasn't leaving."

"Good." George took his hands — *what?* — and pulled them into his lap.

Dream stared down at them, watching George's fingers slide between his, watching pale thumbs paint the insides of his wrists. Something was tightening up in his throat.

George cocked his head. "Why are you being weird?"

"Wh—" Dream's head snapped up. He spluttered. "I'm not being weird."

"Yes you are. You're all twitchy. What is it, Dream?"

He sighed, short. "I—" but there wasn't an end to that sentence. *I'm scared that this is going to end. I don't know why you're dragging it out when we both know we can't keep doing this. I want to keep doing this, with you, forever.* Those weren't things he could say. He squeezed George's fingers. "I'm just...worried. We aren't, like— this isn't how we usually are. And I know it's just because you're sick, but—" He looked up, heart pounding under his tongue when he met George's eyes. "What if I like it, like this? What if I don't want to stop? Sorry, that's a lot, I shouldn't have said that, I—"

"Dream." George stopped him with a hand on his chest, warm, his palm pressed into skin. "I love you."

Dream's mouth flapped, useless, his brain gone mute. "I— what?"

"You heard me." George smirked at him. "I don't know why you're so surprised. It's not the first time I've said it."

"Yeah— well," Dream's processing skills were still playing catch-up, "you were delirious the other time. And half asleep. How was I supposed to know if you meant it or if you were just, like, saying nonsense?"

"I meant it," George said. Then, quieter, "I mean it."

Dream did not know what to do with this information. Because 'I love you' could mean a lot of things. Was George's 'I love you' the one that meant 'you can kiss me if you want'?

Dream stared at him, flitting his gaze back and forth between dark eyes, but all he saw was honesty. George, simple and real and open for him to see.

He supposed the only way to find out was to ask. "Can I kiss you?"

George's nose scrunched up. "No. Ew."

Oh. Fuck. He supposed he should have prepared for this possibility. An anchor melded to his ribs and dragged them down into his stomach, aching from the inside out until his head spun.

"Sorry, uh." His tongue felt like lead. "I'm sorry. I don't know what I was thinking. I—"

"Dream, shut up." George swung his legs over the side of the bed. *He's leaving he's leaving he's—* "I meant it's gross because I have morning breath *and* puke breath. Let me brush my teeth first."

"O-oh." His body could not keep up with this, pumping him full of every hormone it had access to in hopes of finding the right one. George loved him. George didn't want to kiss him. George wanted to kiss him but only after he brushed his teeth. George was getting up and crossing the room and his ass looked fucking fantastic in those boxers.

Jesus Christ.

Heart pounding, Dream got up and joined George in the bathroom. It still smelled faintly of vomit. He didn't have a toothbrush with him, so he just used his finger and a glob of George's toothpaste.

There was something building in his chest, something like hope. Dream let it unfold, delicate, across his ribs and up into his face. George wanted to kiss him. George wanted to kiss him. Light flowed through his veins.

In the mirror, George made eye-contact with him and smiled. He linked his right pinky with Dream's left, squeezing slightly and then just letting them sway. Dream thought this might be his favorite memory in a bathroom, like, ever. Even though it smelled bad and his finger felt weird rubbing at his teeth. This was still the best.

They spit in the sink, and looked at each other, and there was still toothpaste foam on their mouths when Dream leaned in and kissed him.

George giggled, curling a hand around Dream's neck and pushing his face away in contrasting motion. "Dream!"

He wiped the foam from his mouth with the back of his fist, then did the same to Dream's. Dream barely gave him time to pull his hand away before he was kissing him again.

George kissed him back, grinning until he wasn't, until his hands smoothed across Dream's cheeks and he was pushing into his mouth like he was dying. Dream thought this must be heaven, so sweet it almost hurt, the light rushing in behind his eyelids and blinding him. He held George's waist like a prayer, molding to his mouth so perfect and warm, and he had never expected for things to go like this. He must have died and gone to heaven.

George pulled back an inch, just far enough to move his mouth freely. "God, I've been wanting to do that for so long."

Dream was dead, in heaven, at this very moment. "Really?"

"Yes, you idiot." He leaned in again.

And they kissed for a long time. In the gross smelling bathroom, bare feet on the cold tiles, they kissed until their mouths were messy red. Dream cupped both sides of George's face and stared at him, the most precious thing he could hold in his two hands.

"You know, I didn't expect to be mostly naked the first time I kissed you," George said, because he was George.

Dream burst out laughing. He was a little less sentimental now, a little more like pure joy. Everything was light. "Yeah, fuck, me neither." He dropped his hands, squeezing George's bare sides. "Can't say I'm mad about it, though."

This earned him a slap to the chest. "Dream!"

He only laughed harder. "Sorry, sorry."

George's eyes went wide all of a sudden. "Oh, fuck. You're gonna get sick."

"It's fine." Dream shrugged, grinning too hard to care. "I was going to anyway."

And he did. But it was worth it, because he had a boyfriend to take care of him now. A boyfriend who stroked his hair like it was the softest thing in the world. A boyfriend who kissed his

shoulders all night in front of the toilet. A boyfriend who loved him. And wasn't that all he could ever ask for?

End Notes

hi everyone i hope you enjoyed this one!! just something sweet and fluffy for today :>

i've had this almost done for weeks but i haven't been able to post it until now because, ironically, i had to stop writing for a while since i got sick and my brain was too mush to write anything coherent. i hope you can imagine my disappointment when dreamwastaken himself didn't show up at my bedside to nurse me back to health. and now i am sick AGAIN why is the world doing this to me. you can heal my broken heart by leaving a comment or kudos if you enjoyed :))) i love hearing what you guys have to say

love you all, thank you for stopping by <3. see you again soon!

[my twitter](#) if you wanna follow :)

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!